

Message Text

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ACTION IO-13

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 EB-07 OMB-01 TRSE-00 AF-10

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FM AMEMBASSY FREETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5443

INFO AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

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EO 11652: NA

TAGS: EAID, UNDP

SUBJ: 24TH GOVERNING COUNCIL: UNDP REPORT ON ITS FUTURE ROLE

REF: STATE 86320

1. EMBASSY DISCUSSION WITH LOCAL UNDP RES REP BASED ON REFTEL HAS ELICITED THE FOLLOWING COMMENT. NO DISCUSSIONS CON-TEMPLATED WITH GOSL.

2. UNDP RES REP FOR SIERRA LEONE, DR. WILLIARD HARPER, IS AMCIT WHO HAS COOPERATED CLOSELY WITH EMBASSY IN PAST. COMMENTS ARE IN RESPONSE TO ISSUES LISTED IN REFTEL PARAS 5 AND 6.

5. A. ISSUE THE PROBLEM OF EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK, OR HOW CAN UNDP CREATE A SYSTEM OF CIRCULAR LINKAGES IN WHICH LESSONS AND EXPERIENCE DERIVED FROM ONE PROJECT ARE APPLIED TO OTHER AND SUBSEQUENT PROJECTS.

5. A. RESPONSE - DISTINCTION SHOULD BE MADE BETWEEN TECHNICAL LINKAGES WHICH SHOULD BE CONCERN OF AGENCY EXECUTING PROJECT AND MANAGERIAL/ADMINISTRATIVE/GENERAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY LINK-
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AGES WHICH WOULD BEST BE IDENTIFIED BY UNDP. AGENCIES DO REASONABLY GOOD JOB OF COORDINATING TECHNICAL LINKAGES. ATTEMPT TO COORDINATE GENERAL LINKAGES IS BEING MADE BY AFRICA BUREAU IN ITS RECENTLY ESTABLISHED PROGRAMME ANALYSIS DIVISION. HOWEVER, VIEW OF DIFFERING SPECIFIC CONDITIONS AMONG COUNTRIES DOUBTFUL WHETHER IDENTIFICATION OF SUCH LINKAGES CAN BE EASILY FORMALIZED. COULD PROBABLY BE DONE BETTER AT FIELD LEVEL BY

HAVING MORE FREQUENT INFORMAL CONTACTS BETWEEN FIELD OFFICE STAFF IN NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES. USE OF GENERAL COMPUTERIZED SYSTEM AT HEADQUARTERS WHEREBY ALL UNDP PROJECT INPUTS ARE FED, MAY SERVE TO DETERMINE WHETHER EXPERIENCE DERIVED FROM ONE PROJECT COULD BE APPLIED TO OTHER SUBSEQUENT PROJECTS.

5. B. ISSUE - THE PROBLEM OF COORDINATION, BOTH WITHIN HEAD-QUARTERS (I.E. RELATIONS WITH THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES) AND IN THE FIELD (I.E. RE-INFORCING THE RES REP AS THE COORDINATOR AND TEAM LEADER OF UN TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.)

5. B. RESPONSE - AIM SHOULD BE TO WELD UN ORGANIZATIONS AND AGENCIES INTO SOMETHING MORE COHESIVE AND CONSISTENT. SHOULD THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES HAVE MORE INDEPENDENCE OF UN AS WHOLE THAN TECHNICAL MINISTRIES DO WITHIN A GOVERNMENT? UNDP S.L. FEELS THAT RES REP SHOULD CONTINUE AS COORDINATOR AND TEAM LEADER OF ALL UN TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE. AT FIELD LEVEL POLICY THAT UNDP RES REP SHOULD REPRESENT AND COORDINATE ACTIVITIES OF THE AGENCIES SHOULD NOT BE ERODED BY APPOINTMENT OF AGENCY REPRESENTATIVES OF EQUAL STATUS.

5. C. ISSUE- FUTURE ROLES OF UNDP: IN COORDINATION AND ASSESSMENT OF OVERALL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS AND IN PROVIDING ADDITIONAL TECHNICAL SERVICES IN THE FIELD; CAN UNDP FIELD OFFICES COPE WITH SUCH ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES?

5. C. RESPONSE - ROLE OF THE UNDP FIELD OFFICE SHOULD VARY ACCORDING TO STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF GOVERNMENT. WHERE GOVERNMENT COORDINATION OF DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE WEAK, UNDP LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CAN PLAY USEFUL ROLE EITHER THROUGH FORMAL MECHANISM SUCH AS DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE GROUP OR INFORMALLY. WHERE GOVERNMENT PLANNING MECHANISM WEAK UNDP OFFICE SHOULD COMPLEMENT IT WITH RESPECT TO PROGRAMMING OWN INPUTS. UNDP OFFICES COULD FILL BOTH ROLES PROVIDED (1) THERE IS GREATER EMPHASIS ON QUALITY OF STAFF, (2) RED-TAPE IS REDUCED TO MINIMUM. STAFF MUST BE RECRUITED WHO ARE DEDICATED PROFESSIONALS, NOT OUT-OF-WORK POLITICIANS NOR COUSINS OF MINISTERS NOR REJECTS OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE MINISTRIES. IF JUNIOR STAFF ALL START AT HEADQUARTERS (AT LEAST FOR ONE YEAR) THERE WOULD BE A BETTER CHANCE OF OBJECTIVE ASSESSMENT OF THEIR CAPABILITIES THAN IN SMALL FIELD OFFICES.

5. D. ISSUE - THE QUESTION OF INCREASED RESOURCES: ARE THERE DIFFERENT WAYS OF ACHIEVING MORE DEPENDABLE FUNDING E.G., LONG-TERM CONTRIBUTIONS, ATTRACTING ADDITIONAL OPEC CONTRIBUTIONS, COST-SHARING BY RECIPIENT GOVERNMENTS, ETC.

5. D. RESPONSE - FLUCTUATIONS IN LEVELS OF EXPENDITURE ARE

INEVITABLE AND MAJOR DONORS SHOULD PERHAPS INSTITUTE SOME SORT OF 'CREDIT GUARANTEE' TO AVOID RECURRENCE OF LIQUIDITY CRISIS. ALTERNATIVE IS FOR UNDP TO KEEP HIGH RESERVE AND CONSEQUENTLY MAINTAIN SMALLER PROGRAMME THAN TOTAL RESERVES WOULD OTHERWISE PERMIT. PURPOSE OF 'CREDIT GUARANTEE' WOULD NOT BE TO ENCOURAGE OVERSPENDING BUT TO AVOID VIOLENT DOWNWARD FLUCTUATIONS WHICH DISRUPTIVE AND EVEN PERMANENTLY DAMAGING.

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5. E. ISSUE - SHOULD THERE CONTINUE TO BE A SINGLE GENERAL
UNDP FUND?

5. E. RESPONSE - SEEMS TO BE NO ADVANTAGE IN FRAGMENTING UNDP
FUNDS EXCEPT FOR POLITICAL REASONS SUCH AS NECESSITATED
SEPARATE FUNDING OF UNFPA.

6. A. ISSUE #1 - SHOULD UNDP CONTINUE TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE
UNIVERSALLY OR SHOULD IT FOCUS ON THE LEAST DEVELOPED? CAN
UNDP COPE WITH THE MORE ADVANCED NEEDS OF THE MORE DEVELOPED
LDC'S AND WOULD SUCH LDC'S BE PREPARED TO RECEIVE UNDP
ASSISTANCE ON A COST REIMBURSABLE BASIS?

6.A. ISSUE #1 RESPONSE - SHOULD ENCOURAGE COST SHARING ABOVE
CERTAIN LEVEL OF GNP AND TOTAL REIMBURSEMENT ABOVE HIGHER
LEVEL. HOWEVER SHOULD NOT BE TOO RIGID IN THIS AS EVEN MORE
ADVANCED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES OFTEN RETAIN POCKETS OF LOWER
DEVELOPMENT WHERE UNDP COULD LEGITIMATELY CONTINUE TO HELP.
JUSTIFICATION WOULD BE THAT UNDP ASSISTING WEAKER SECTORS
OF ECONOMY AGAINST STRONGER AND BY INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION
OF PROBLEM WOULD PUT INDIRECT PRESSURE ON GOVERNMENT TO USE

OWN WEALTH TO SOLVE IT. THIS WOULD JUSTIFY SOME UNDP EXPENDITURES IN MORE PROSPEROUS DEVELOPING COUNTRIES.
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6. A. ISSUE #2 - WOULD THIS REQUIRE MAJOR STRUCTURAL AND OPERATIONAL CHANGES WITHIN UNDP?

6. A. ISSUE #2 RESPONSE - WOULD DEPEND ON ABILITY OF AGENCIES TO DELIVER EFFICIENTLY AND PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY EXPERTS.

6. B. ISSUE #1 - HOW CAN THE UNDP GOVERNING COUNCIL CONTINUE TO COPE WITH THE OVERBURDEN OF PAPER WORK?

6. B. ISSUE NO #1 RESPONSE - THE GOVERNING COUNCIL CANNOT CONTINUE TO COPE WITH PAPER WORK. PROBLEM IS WORTH REVIEWING.

6. B. ISSUE #2 - IS THERE A NEED FOR A STANDING INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE, AND A SINGLE YEARLY SESSION OF THE COUNCIL?

6. B. ISSUE #2 RESPONSE - WOULD BE DESIRABLE TO REDUCE GOVERNING COUNCIL SESSION TO ONCE PER YEAR. HOWEVER STANDING COMMITTEE SHOULD NOT BE ESTABLISHED AS WOULD TEND TO DETRACT FROM ADMINISTRATION OF UNDP AND CREATE UNDESIRABLE DIVIDED RESPONSIBILITY.

6. C. ISSUE - ARE WE STILL INTERESTED IN THE CURRENT FOCUS ON COUNTRY PROGRAMS OR SHOULD WE PLACE MORE EMPHASIS ON INTER-COUNTRY PROGRAMS?

6. C. RESPONSE - GIVEN STRENGTH OF NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS, NATIONAL COUNTRY PROGRAMMES UNAVOIDABLE.

3. EMBASSY COMMENT

A. UNDP SIERRA LEONE OFFICE HAS PROVED GENERALLY EFFECTIVE IN COORDINATING UN PROGRAMS IN COUNTRY. THE UNDP RES REP HAS HAS SOME DIFFICULTY IN DEALING EFFECTIVELY WITH THE HOST GOVERNMENT'S TOP LEADERSHIP. AT LOWER LEVELS UNDP RELATIONSHIPS WITH GOSL SEEM GOOD.
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B. UNDP RES REP HAS MADE EFFORTS TO ELIMINATE LESS EFFECTIVE UN PROGRAMS AND CONCENTRATE ON HIGH PRIORITY ONES. LIQUIDITY CRISIS CAUSED SOME REDUCTION IN TOTAL UN PROGRAM OF ASSISTANCE

BUT LESS THAN IN MANY OTHER WEST AFRICAN COUNTRIES. THIS DUE IN PART TO RES REP'S EARLIER CAUTIOUS APPROACH TO PROGRAM EXPANSION. EFFORTS TO END LESS EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS HAS MET SOME HOST GOVERNMENT RESISTANCE.

C. UNDP HAS ENCOUNTERED PROBLEMS SIMILAR TO THOSE OF OTHER DONORS IN DEALING WITH GOSL, NAMELY GOSL LACK OF RESPONSIVENESS TO OFFERS TO ASSISTANCE, LIMITED ABILITY TO COLLABORATE IN PROJECT DESIGN, FAILURE TO PROVIDE AGREED NUMBER OF COUNTERPARTS FOR PROJECTS AT LEVEL OF COMPETENCE REQUIRED AND FAILURE TO FULLY MEET ITS SHARE OF PROJECTS IN TIMELY MANNER.

D. EMBASSY AGREES THAT RES REP'S POSITION AS COORDINATOR AND TEAM LEADER OF UN TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE SHOULD NOT BE ERODED BY APPOINTMENT OF UN AGENCY REPS OF EQUAL STATUS. EMBASSY FEELS UNDP OFFICE SHOULD COMPLEMENT GOVERNMENT PLANNING MECHANISM WHICH IS WEAK. HOWEVER PRESENT MAIN UNDP CONTRIBUTION TO GOSL PLANNING, FIVE ADVISORS TO THE PLANNING UNIT OF THE MINISTRY OF DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC PLANNING, HAS NOT PROVED EFFECTIVE AND MAY BE PHASED OUT AT END OF 1977. UNDP RECOGNIZES SHORTCOMINGS OF THIS GROUP AND HAS BEEN ATTEMPTING TO TERMINATE CONTRACT, AGAINST GOSL RESISTANCE, FOR PAST YEAR. QUALITY OF UNDP STAFF GENERALLY OF HIGH CALIBRE. SOME UN AGENCY PERSONNEL ARE LESS EFFECTIVE, PARTICULARLY WFP. SAMUELS

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